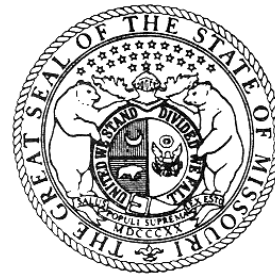


PRESS RELEASE

STATE SENATOR DAN CLEMENS – 20TH DISTRICT



Room 418, State Capitol
Jefferson City, Mo 65101
Phone: 573-751-4008 Fax: 573-751-4096
Email: dan_clemens@senate.state.mo.us



Missouri Senate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 7, 2004

Weekly Capitol Report

JEFFERSON CITY- The State Senate this week gave final approval to the \$18.8 billion budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1. We were able to increase expenditures in several key areas without the aid of state tax increases. The rebounding economy has helped us to do this.

We included a \$200 million increase in funding for public schools and a \$660 million increase for Social Services that preserves health programs for the poor without increasing taxes.

The Medicaid portion of the budget is expected to total nearly \$5 billion in state and federal funds- THE LARGEST SINGLE STATE PROGRAM.

Medicaid now covers nearly one in five Missourians, and enrollment rose 5.6 percent from March 2003 through March 2004. The Department of Social Services says more than half of the enrollees are children, but most of the costs come from elderly and disabled participants.

The budget allocates \$4.767 billion for elementary and secondary education and \$6.225 billion for the Department of Social Services -- the two largest budget areas in the \$18.8 billion package. For comparison's sake, in the 2004 budget for education we allocated \$4.550 billion for elementary and secondary education and \$5.559 billion for social services.

Lawmakers also approved \$1.049 billion for the state's colleges and universities, an increase of more than \$20 million over what was budget for the current fiscal year.

The budget authorizes \$1.643 billion for Transportation, \$172 million for the state's Office of Administration and \$723 million for public employees.

The state's Department of Agriculture would receive \$36 million, the Department of Natural Resources would get \$329 million and the Conservation department would receive \$134 million under the final budget.

The budget also contains \$277 million for Economic Development, \$14 million for the Department of Insurance and \$158 million for the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

The Department of Public Safety, which includes the State Highway Patrol and State Water Patrol, would receive \$378 million under the budget. The Department of Corrections would receive \$574 million; the Department of Mental Health would get \$973 million and the Department of Health \$450 million in the final budget.

The budget provides \$122 million for statewide elected officials, \$167 million for the judiciary, \$29 million for public defenders and \$31 million for the General Assembly.

Despite different House and Senate positions on key areas, everyone worked hard to resolve these differences and pass a responsible budget a full day in advance of the constitutional deadline.

We have accomplished what we set out to do – fund all crucial services for our fellow Missourians, and ensure that all schoolchildren will receive the best education system we can provide.

It is now up to the Governor to sign the budget and allow the legislature to move forward with the people's business.

As always, I appreciate your opinion on any legislative matter. If you have any questions or concerns to share, please call me at 1-866-242-0810, or email me at dan_clemens@senate.state.mo.us.

- END -